

San Francisco Bay - Delta Aquatic Habitat Institute



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November 29, 1993

Mr. Lyle Hoag
California Urban Water Agencies
455 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Administrative Support for the Bay-Delta Modeling Forum

Dear Lyle:

You asked that write to you to indicate the interest that the Aquatic Habitat Institute has in providing an administrative home for the Bay-Delta Modeling Forum in the future.

As you are aware, the Aquatic Habitat Institute has firm plans to reorganize into the San Francisco Estuarine Institute in early 1994. The reorganization will involve a new, broadened mission, and expanded role in monitoring the Estuary, and a new structure to the Board of Directors that reflects this new mission and expanded role. Simply stated, the SFEI's mission is to:

Provide the scientific understanding needed to manage competing uses of the complex and biologically complex San Francisco Estuary.

In addition, the SFEI has been named in the San Francisco Estuary Project Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (recently signed by Governor Wilson) as the organization charged with the responsibility monitoring the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the Estuary, as required by the Clean Water Act.

The Board of Directors of the SFEI is to have a designee of the California Environmental Protection Agency, the California Resources Agency, two user group (dischargers and water users) designees and two public interest group designees. The Regional Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the chairman of the Institute's Science Advisory Panel will serve as *ex officio*, non-voting members. The Institute will be involved in monitoring, research, data and information management, and education. Its By-Laws explicitly state that the Institute "... may objectively evaluate the consequences of existing or proposed management approaches, but will not advocate, lobby for, or formally recommend specific laws, regulations, standards or other management activities governing use of the resources of the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary."



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I believe that nurturing an organization like the Bay Delta Modeling Forum is entirely consistent with the new Institute's role. Models are, and will increasingly be vital to providing the information needed to manage competing uses of the Bay and Delta. The formation of the Forum is a very exciting step towards improving the value, credibility and usefulness of models to provide for improved decision-making. I am, therefore, anxious to have the Institute provide whatever support it can to the Forum.

The Aquatic Habitat Institute has 501(c)(3) status which will continue under the new SFEL. If we were providing administrative support for the Forum, we could accept dues, contributions, or contracts on behalf of the Forum, and keep the funds in a separate account. All our funds are audited annually. In addition to audited annual statements, we would be able to provide the Steering Committee and/or the membership with unaudited financial statements on a monthly or quarterly basis. We would be able to provide secretarial support and use of office equipment to the Forum at cost. The Institute's staff is also experienced in managing subcontracts, managing advisory committees and organizing both technical and public workshops and conferences. These services would also be available at cost.

My enthusiasm for accepting a role in managing the Forum must be tempered by three caveats. First, you have indicated that you would estimate the cost of providing administrative and organizational support for the Forum to be approximately \$50,000 per year. The dues of the Forum members are expected to pay for some the direct cost of postage, copying and so on, but not for the staff time required to support the effort. At this time, I cannot commit AHI to provide that kind of subsidy for the new organization. The Institute's funding consists of both fee for service and general support contributions. Most of our general support comes from companies or organizations whose primary interest is in the area of water pollution and its effects, whereas much of the work of the Forum will be concerned with water use and its effects. This "problem" may prove to be a transition issue only; if new members of the Institute's Board of Directors were to solicit general support (and/or specific support for this project) from water users, this would not be an issue. Alternately, I would be happy to work together with members of the Steering Committee to try to develop a funding base for support of the Forum.

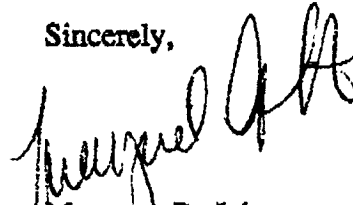
Second, we have found that many state and federal agencies have difficulty in providing funds to non-profit institutions on a sole source basis. This could hinder our ability to manage contracts for projects on behalf of the Forum in an efficient manner. We hope at some point to remedy this problem through legislation recognizing SFEL, but it could prove problematic in the short run. State and federal agency sponsors of the Forum should be consulted as to whether they would see this as a barrier to their provision of funds for the work of the Forum.

Mr. Lyle Hoag
Page 3

The final caveat concerns staff expertise. We currently do not have on staff any professional modelers, and our experience with models has been limited. If the Forum members of the Forum wish to have staff available with this kind of expertise, we would have to provide it through a subcontract arrangement or in some similar fashion. If on the other hand, if technical expertise is to be provided on a voluntary basis by the member organizations, this may not be an issue.

I do not believe any of the caveats noted above presents a real barrier to the Institute playing a role in helping to make the Forum a viable entity. If the Forum membership believes the Institute is an appropriate "home" for the Forum, either on a temporary or permanent basis, I would be happy to work with the Steering Committee to resolve these or any other issues.

Sincerely,



Margaret R. Johnston
Executive Director